

the purpose of educational and career advancement.

The bill authorizes national activities to assist States and local providers in developing valid, measurable, and reliable performance data, and in using such performance information for the improvement of adult education and family literacy education programs. The bill also includes provisions to support research and evaluation of adult education activities at the national level. Finally, the bill places an emphasis on integrating English literacy with civics education, as well as adult education and occupational training activities.

Title III—Amendments to the Wagner-Peyser Act

Title III of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act makes amendments to the Wagner-Peyser Act of 1933, which authorizes the public employment services and the employment statistics system. Amendments to the Wagner-Peyser Act generally maintain current law but also reflect the need to align the statute with the other changes in the bill such as including the State employment services in the unified State plan; aligning performance accountability indicators with those indicators used for core programs—as described in section 116 of title I; renaming “employment statistics” to the “workforce and labor market information system” and updating the Workforce Information Council; and providing for staff professional development in order to strengthen the quality of services. Authorization of appropriations for the workforce and labor market information council is provided for each of the fiscal years of 2015 through 2020.

Title IV—Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act amends and reauthorizes the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The Rehabilitation Act was last reauthorized in 1998.

The Rehabilitation Act is an important law for individuals with disabilities, particularly those with significant disabilities. It authorizes programs that affect the daily lives of many individuals with disabilities, including the vocational rehabilitation program (training, services, and supports for employment); the independent living program; and research and information on new technology to assist individuals with disabilities.

There remains a critical need for employment and training services for individuals with disabilities. Almost 25 years after the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, it is still difficult for many individuals with significant disabilities to find full time employment that is commensurate with their skills, interests, and goals. Yet State vocational rehabilitation programs can play a significant role in meeting this need by providing training, services and supports for individuals with disabilities.

It is especially important to provide young people with disabilities more opportunities to practice and improve their workplace skills, to consider their career interests, and to get real world work experience. Those activities are prioritized in the amendments to the Act. For example, the bill requires State vocational rehabilitation agencies to make “pre-employment transition services” available to all students with disabilities, and to coordinate those services with transition services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. State vocational rehabilitation programs will set aside at least 15 percent of their Federal program funds to help young people with disabilities transition from secondary school to postsecondary education programs and employment.

In addition, these amendments establish a framework to ensure every young person with a disability, regardless of their level of disability, has the opportunity to experience competitive, integrated employment. These requirements will provide young people with disabilities with the opportunity to develop their skills and to use supports, available through State vocational rehabilitation programs, to experience competitive, integrated employment as they leave school and enter the workforce.

In order to better align the Independent Living program that serves individuals with significant disabilities living in the community with other similar efforts, the amendments transition the administration of the Independent Living program from the Department of Education to the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living. The transition moves the program to an agency with a lifespan and community focus and will better allow the program to fulfill its goal to support “independent living . . . and the integration and full inclusion of individuals with disabilities into the mainstream of American society.”

The amendments also incorporate “independent living” into the name and mission of the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research and similarly move that program’s administration from the Department of Education to the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living in order to better align the program priorities with agency goals and priorities.

Title V—General Provisions

The bill repeals the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 in its entirety, replacing it with reforms to better serve unemployed and underemployed workers as well as employers. In doing so, authority is provided to the Secretaries of Labor, Education, and Health and Human Services to establish a smooth and orderly transition period to implement this Act.

Mr. KLINE. Madam Speaker, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act maintains without change from the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 a nondiscrimination requirement. The requirement not only prohibits participating organizations from discriminating against those who need job training assistance, but it also requires faith-based organizations to stop considering religion when hiring staff as the price of partnering with the federal government to help these job seekers.

The Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 (RFRA) prohibits the government from substantially burdening religious exercise. RFRA applies to every federal law, and it protects the right of religious hiring, notwithstanding the restrictive language we just affirmed. This specific use of RFRA is explained in an extensive Office of Legal Counsel (OLC) memorandum dated June 29, 2007.

This use of RFRA to protect religious hiring by religious organizations even when a federal grant program prohibits it was recently reaffirmed by the Office on Violence Against Women (OVAW) of the Department of Justice. In reauthorizing the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) last year, Congress inserted into the law a broad nondiscrimination requirement such as the one we maintain in today’s workforce bill. On April 9, 2014, OVAW issued “Frequently Asked Questions” about [this new—should this read “the VAWA”] nondiscrimination requirement. In Q and A 6, OVAW explained the OLC memorandum on RFRA’s applicability and set out the way a religious organization that engaged in religious

hiring may take part in VAWA-funded services despite the addition of the nondiscrimination requirement.

Q and A 6 further includes a link to a long-standing Department of Justice form, the Certificate of Exemption for Hiring Practices on the Basis of Religion, used by religious organizations to appeal under RFRA to participate in DOJ programs.

The religious hiring freedom is a vital freedom for religious organizations. Therefore I am pleased to stress this important protection found in the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. WALORSKI). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KLINE) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendments to the bill, H.R. 803.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. TIERNEY. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, July 9, 2014.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,
The Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on July 9, 2014 at 10:47 a.m.:

That the Senate agreed to S. Res. 496.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2015

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SIMPSON. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4923, and that I may include tabular material on the same.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Idaho?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 641 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 4923.